

MSIP Frequently Asked Curriculum Questions

6.1 The district implements written curriculum for all its instructional programs.

Q 1—What are the main differences between second- and third-cycle curriculum guides?

A 1—During the second cycle, curriculum guides were required to have these components: rationales, course descriptions, goals for graduates, measurable learner objectives, cross references to the Show-Me Standards or Curriculum Frameworks, and the date of board approval. During the second cycle instructional strategies and assessments were optional components. During the third cycle, instructional activities and assessments are required components along with those that were required during second cycle, in accordance with the required phase-in schedule. If the district has evidence of curriculum review during the past five years and meets all of the Second Cycle Standards, scoring guide points will not be deducted based on Indicator 6.1.1 alone. The absence of appropriate activities and assessments will generate comments and/or concerns. District with written curriculum that does not meet Second Cycle Standards will receive no points and concerns.

Q 2—What curriculum guides will the team review when they are in the district?

A 2—The team will review curriculum guides for **all** instructional programs listed on the Report Writing Form curriculum chart. The Report Writing Form asks the team to review curricula for communication arts, math, science, social studies, health education, physical education, art, music, all vocational programs, foreign language, and practical arts.

The team will also note the presence of curriculum guides in the areas of preschool, gifted education, guidance, technology, LMC, special education (life skills), cadet teaching, and other. This group of guides will not be held to the same MSIP Standards as the subjects listed in the curriculum chart. In order to qualify as a curriculum guide, appropriate grade-level learner objectives are required.

The schedule for reviewing written curriculum guides for Third-Cycle MSIP required standards is as follows:

- 2001-2002 one of the core subjects tested on the MAP (math, science, social studies, communication arts) is required.
- 2002-2003 two of the core subjects are required.
- 2003-2004 three of the core subjects are required.
- 2004-2005 four of the core subjects are required.
- 2005-2006 **all MAP subject curriculum guides, core and non-core areas, will be reviewed using Third-Cycle MSIP Standards.**

(NOTE: Every year during the Third Cycle, all other guides will be reviewed on the basis of Second-Cycle standards.)

Q 3—Are the curriculum requirements the same for A+ Schools and approved vocational courses.

A 3—A+ and vocational curricula should have contained all of the required and optional components during second cycle. Therefore, all of the components should be there during third-cycle. The A+ curriculum should be fully aligned in one subject area each year until all subjects are fully aligned. The vocational curriculum must be brought fully to third-cycle standards before the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year.

Q 4—Can the district use the Show-Me Standards for the graduate goals?

A 4—Graduate goals for a subject area can be considered in place if cross-references to the Show-Me Standards are in place K-12 and the local school board has reviewed and approved the curriculum guide.

Q 5—What is cross-referencing, and is it required?

A 5—Objectives are matched, either in part or whole, with some aspects of the Show-Me Standards and, may or may not represent true external alignment. At a minimum, objectives must be cross-referenced to the Show-Me Standards or Curriculum Frameworks

Q 6—What is meant by full alignment, and is it required?

A 6—Full alignment means that both external alignment and internal alignment are present. External alignment means that the measurable learner objectives reflect the demands of the Show-Me Performance and Knowledge Standards or Curriculum Frameworks at the appropriate learning level. Internal alignment means that there is close relationship among measurable learner objectives, instructional activities, and assessments. Both must be present for full alignment. Full alignment is not a requirement for MSIP during the third cycle.

Q 7—Are full alignment and cross-referencing different?

A 7—For MSIP purposes, full alignment and cross-referencing are considered different. Cross-referencing is the minimum requirement for the third cycle of MSIP. Full alignment is a factor that could support a strength for the curriculum standard.

Q 8—How will full alignment be determined?

A 8—During each year of the third cycle, the district will choose two objectives for each grade level from each curriculum guide evaluated by the third-cycle standards according to the phase-in schedule for that year to check for full alignment. If 75% of the components display appropriate full alignment, credit will be given for full alignment.

Q 9—What does it mean that a district must have instructional activities and assessments (including performance-based assessments) for a majority of the objectives?

A 9—Most districts will have the goal of writing instructional activities and assessments for all of the measurable learner objectives. However, in order to get full credit for the Third-Cycle Standard, only a majority of the measurable learner objectives must have activities and assessments in the required guides during the review. There should be a variety of assessment types, including performance-based assessments, in the required curriculum guides. Some activities and assessments may cover more than one objective, or one objective may have multiple activities and/or assessments.

Q 10—How are instructional strategies and instructional activities different?

A 10—For MSIP purposes, instructional activities are descriptions of the presentation of the material that reflects the learning level of the objective and the knowledge and skills necessary for success on the assessment.

Instructional strategies are teaching-learning techniques used to present instruction in the classroom. Some examples are: lecture, whole-group instruction, cooperative learning, flexible grouping, one-on-one instruction, computer-assisted instruction, and hands-on activities. Reference to the instructional strategy should be included in the required curriculum guide. It may be part of the description of the instructional activity or listed separately.

The team will determine if a variety of appropriate strategies are implemented and record that on the Report Writing Form.

Q 11—Will the team need to see copies of the actual activities and/or assessments?

A 11—The team will need to see a complete description of the activity and/or assessment. The description should be detailed enough that a teacher could easily understand how to duplicate the activity and/or assessment. The learning level of the activity and assessment should match that expected in the objective to be fully aligned. It should include the teaching strategy. For A+ and vocational, each assessment should include a mastery level.

It is also acceptable to have copies of the actual activities and/or assessments in the guide or cross-referenced to the objectives in a separate file or binder. It is important that the team members have access to enough information to help determine if the curriculum is complete and aligned.

Specific references to pages in a textbook or other resource are also acceptable as long as all teachers have access to those resources, and MSIP team members have access to these publications.

Generic references such as “worksheet, quiz, unit test, or rubric-graded test.” are not acceptable.

Q 12—Do all measurable objectives have to be aligned?

A 12—The district is responsible to have learner objectives in place to meet the demands of the Show-Me Standards. The district may go beyond the standards and offer programs and instruction that exceeds the breadth and depth of the standards. The curriculum guides may also list required objectives that may be at a level not easily aligned to the standards. In instances such as these, objectives may not be aligned.

MSIP will look at all of the listed curriculum objectives for each course or grade to determine alignment to the Show-Me Standards or Curriculum Frameworks and a sample of objectives with accompanying activities and assessments to determine full alignment.

Q 13—Can goals for graduation be different at elementary, middle, and high school levels?

A 13—Graduate goals may be overall goals for all graduates, interim goals for grade levels or grade spans that lead to meeting the overall goals, and/or goals for subject matter fields that relate to the overall graduate goals.

Q 14—How does the district show that an activity or assessment deals with more than one objective?

A 14—The district should devise a system for tracking the connections among objectives, activities, and assessments. If they are always printed together in the curriculum guides, there should not be a problem in determining the connections. The simplest way is to think about how the teachers in the district will know which objectives are aligned with which activities and assessments. If the objectives, activities, and assessments are not printed in the same document, it would be helpful to mark the aligned components in some manner such as colored highlighters or colored tape tabs.

Q 15—When one assessment is aligned to more than one objective, how does this count toward the requirement that “...specific assessments (including performance-based assessments)” are to be developed “for a majority of the learner objectives?”

A 15—If one major assessment is used to assess several objectives, all of those objectives count toward the majority. Performance-based assessments that combine multiple objectives and combine multiple content and process standards can help make the kind of important connections that lead to success on the MAP.

Q 16—Will districts reviewed in years 2-5 of the third cycle be required to designate two objectives per grade level as the basis for determining full alignment?

A 16—It is anticipated that districts will continue to identify two objectives for each grade level from each required core curriculum guide. The review team may select a sample of objectives from those identified by the district to determine full alignment.

Q 17—Do DESE Curriculum Section expectations for third-cycle curriculum differ from MSIP expectations?

A 17—The Curriculum Section has designed training for school districts that need help in writing meaningful curriculum that will lead to improved instruction and improved student performance. Some of the examples used to demonstrate well-developed curriculum go beyond the basic requirements of MSIP and would exceed the standard. However, familiarity with these examples should help districts as they write curriculum and plan for curriculum improvement.

Q 18—Must the board approve every change in the curriculum?

A 18—The date of board review and approval must be in each curriculum guide. When minor adjustments are made, it is not necessary to obtain formal adoption. MSIP requires that systematic procedures be used to review and revise curriculum. This indicator does not require formal board approval each time a guide is updated.

Q 19—How will equity, technology, research, and workplace-readiness skills be checked?

A 19—The district will complete a chart in the *District Response to the Standards* that asks for specific places in the curriculum guides where the team can find learner objectives related to the specific topics in the three grade spans (elementary, middle school, and high school). The team members will review the curriculum guides to determine how instruction is presented on each of these topics. The topics may be covered in any area of the curriculum that is appropriate and reaches all students in these grade spans.